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FOCUS

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A Crisis of Faith in Education?

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Blacks and the Religious Right Have Few Common Interests

Polls, History Show That Alliance Is Unlikely

JCPS Political TrendLetter:

Congressional Black Caucus, Upset in Atlanta, Statewide Candidates, "Across the Nation"

JCPS 1986 Roster of Black Elected Officials

Perspective

Black Electorate Is More Independent, Less Predictable

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Black Electorate Has Become More Independent, Less Predictable

Although the overwhelming majority of blacks (76 percent) identify themselves as Democrats, there are growing signs that the black electorate is becoming more flexible, less predictable. If these trends continue, they could significantly affect future voting patterns and political party alignment.

In a number of elections throughout the country black voters appear to be more open to appeals from candidates other than Democrats. While this is good news for the Republicans, there is little evidence that the GOP will harvest a bumper crop of blacks anytime soon. But the prospect could change if the already high level of black frustration with the Democratic party continues to rise. Not only are black Democrats complaining about the way their leaders and candidates are treated, but they also generally believe they will be the inevitable losers as the party seeks to win back the white South.

Another indication that the prospect could change is that we are beginning to see a conspicuous number of blacks switching from the Democrats to the Republicans. While the conversion of Michigan's William Lucas captured national headlines, less publicized conversions have been taking place throughout the country, and many of the new black Republicans have significant constituencies and influence in their communities.

Another factor that will influence black voting behavior is the growth of a black middle class that is more independent and less motivated by political tradition. Perhaps of even greater significance is the emergence of a large number of black voters who are under the age of 30 and who are bringing new attitudes, demands, and allegiances into the political arena. Of the 19 million blacks who are eligible to vote, 37 percent of them are under 30. They are somewhat removed from the intense civil rights battles that dominated partisan politics, especially between 1964 and 1972, and they have considerably less loyalty to the Democratic party than their parents and grandparents.

Yet another indication of change in black political attitudes is the campaign styles of black candidates who seek to gain white votes while retaining their black support. These styles may be seen in the campaigns of Tom Bradley, Virginia Lieutenant Governor Doug Wilder, New Orleans Mayor Sidney Barthelemy, and more recently, John Lewis, who won the Democratic nomination in Atlanta's 5th congressional district with about 80 percent of the white vote. These politicians, among many others, underscore the importance of coalition politics, especially in jurisdictions with a majority or a large number of white voters.

If all these trends continue, they could have major ramifications. They could produce divergent views among blacks about goals and methods, especially on economic and civil rights issues. They could result in more blacks leveraging their votes between the two parties or pursuing independent political strategies. And those trends could lead strong black candidates, like Julian Bond and John Lewis, to compete more with one another for office.

Under these circumstances, the black vote could become a more tempting target for coalition-building and especially for those Republicans who are determined to make their party strong and competitive nationally. At the same time, the Democratic party might be persuaded not to move so precipitously and clumsily in trying to distance itself from the black electorate.

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

FOCUS

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A Crisis of Faith in Education?

Young Blacks Internalize Message That "Excellence Is for Others"

by Clifton R. Wharton

Editor's note: In a plenary address to the National Urban League on July 21, 1986, Dr. Wharton discussed several crisis-proportion trends in education for blacks. He said high school dropout rates have become "obscenely high," college enrollment has dropped, fewer students than in the 1970s are going to graduate and professional school, and "far too few" graduate students are going into high-demand fields: in 1984, "Blacks received 15 Ph.D's in engineering, 13 in business administration, 11 in physics, 4 in mathematics, and 3 in computer science."

Dr. Wharton's view is that, to a large extent, young blacks have been disabled by a negative self-image: "What we are doing is telling them, in a hundred whispered or unspoken ways each day, that we do not really believe in them."

The following is an excerpt from his address.

On most college campuses we have a set of euphemisms. One is "educationally disadvantaged." Another is "academically unprepared." Yet another is "full-opportunity admit." By and large, these clumsy, unlovely phrases are almost universally interpreted to mean one thing. What they mean is "black."

The reverse is also true. Ask any faculty senate or administrative committee about black students, and they will immediately begin to tell you more than you could possibly wish to know about special admission tracks, free tutoring, development counseling, remedial reading labs, and all the other pedagogic paraphernalia associated with, not to put too fine a point on things, academic deficiency.

These views ignore the fact that many black students meet the same standards as all the rest without the slightest need for outside help or special dispensations. They ignore the fact that on most predominantly white campuses, nonminority students far outnumber the minorities in remedial classes. They ignore the facts. The link between blacks and deficiency is as unthinking and as reflexive as the link between deficiency and blacks. It is a stereotype that has taken on a life of its own.

> ***The link between blacks and deficiency is reflexive and unthinking. . . . It is a stereotype with a life of its own.***

The stereotype lives in the minds of many, perhaps even the majority, of Americans. It lives in the press. It lives in Hollywood and on TV. The stereotype also lives in the speeches of too many of our black public officials and political figures, for whom antidiscrimination and antipoverty programs are perennial issues while industrial development and national trade competitiveness are somebody else's problem. And, most to the point, the stereotype is alive—and growing stronger every day—in the minds of our black young people.

Through images, representations, the very structure of language, our society sends an overwhelming message to today's black youth: "Excellence is for other folks. Not you." In one breath we decry Jensen's idiotic theories of black intellectual inferiority; in the next we act as though he might be right.

I would like to be able to say that education is an exception to this corrosive assault—but it is not. From the first day of first grade to the moment when the last strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" fade into silence, many and perhaps most of our schools, colleges, and graduate institutions beat the same dreary drum.

Start in kindergarten. Set up "slow" classes to homogenize the classrooms. Pass the "slow" kids anyway, whether they've learned the material or not. Just make sure they know they're getting by "because they're black."

Design "aptitude tests" and academic tracking for the "culturally impoverished." Hire guidance counsellors who automatically, even benignly, steer black youngsters away from college, toward jobs immediately after high school, or at best toward technical curricula leading to jobs with low ceilings of advancement.

Demand dual college admissions standards—better yet, lobby for a tacit but real lowering of academic standards for graduation, graduate school admission, and professional certification.

And so on. And so on.

It is all reverse discrimination, in

Continued on next page

Dr. Wharton is chancellor, State University of New York, and chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation Board of Directors.

Young Blacks Internalize Message That "Excellence Is for Others"

Continued from previous page

the only sense of that foolish phrase with any real meaning: discrimination by default, discrimination as the abdication of responsibility. And I must ask: Do we think that by these shabby devices we're doing black youngsters a service? A *favor?* No. What we're doing is telling them, in a hundred whispered or unspoken ways each day, that we do not really believe in them. Is it any wonder so many of them are unable to believe in themselves?

It is hard to determine, and even harder to prove, just how thoroughly the individual's ability to compete, to excel, and to achieve is shaped by self-image—which is, of course, closely tied to the perceptions and expectations of the individual exhibited by others. But there is a large and growing body of empirical research data supporting the common-sense view that self-respect is critical to self-realization.

> ***Do we think by these shabby devices we're doing black youngsters a service? A favor? No.***

In a recent issue of the *New Republic*, two black writers summed it up as follows:

> Negative expectancy [among black youth] first tends to generate failure through its impact on behavior, and then induces the individual to blame the failure on lack of ability. . . . This misattribution in turn becomes the basis for a new negative expectancy. By this process the individual, in effect, internalizes the low estimation originally held by others. . . . [This internal low expectation] powerfully affects future competitive behavior and future results.

> ***Empirical research data supports the common-sense view that self-respect is critical to self-realization.***

Over the last several years, I have nursed a growing conviction that one of the most urgent needs for black youngsters is a broad-based effort to foster stronger, more competitive, achievement-oriented self-images.

I must stress that the need is by no means universal. Studies undertaken by Professor Walter Allen at the University of Michigan show the other side of the coin. His 1982 survey of 902 black undergraduates at predominantly white institutions found that the students did not fit the stereotypic profile. Indeed, they held high aspirations and strong self-esteem:

> Sixty-three percent . . . expressed "above average" or "high" levels of self-confidence. Most students, 59%, thought they were above average or high in leadership abilities. And 76% said that overall they were high or above-average people.

It takes only a moment's reflection to realize that these findings do not refute, but rather confirm, my larger thesis. For the fact is that Professor Allen's respondents were *not* the high school dropouts, *not* the youngsters who never enrolled in college, but rather the self-selected successes—the survivors. Already admitted to institutions with formidable academic standards, they represented the survivors of a war of educational attrition. And not surprisingly, they succeeded because they had good high school records and came from stable, well-educated, middle-class families.

Such youngsters are thus the classic exceptions who prove the rule. But the majority of their peers—the majority of our young people, from kindergarten on—cry out for a massive infusion of self-esteem . . . from our society as a whole, but most directly from the black community itself.

Editor's note: In the balance of his address, Dr. Wharton calls for a return to the "tight-knit, supportive, and demanding families" that "were a prominent part of black America during the first half of this century." He says, "We need strategies not to replace affirmative action and judicial activism, but to augment them. While pressing the traditional lines of attack, we also need to open a second front."

To obtain the full text of his address, please contact the Office of the Chancellor, State University of New York, State University Plaza, Albany, N.Y. 12246. ■

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JCPS

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue

- The 21 members of the Congressional Black Caucus have effectively used the congressional committee system to advance the interests of blacks as well as of their other constituents.
- In a stunning upset, John Lewis defeated Julian Bond to gain the Democratic nomination in Georgia's 5th congressional district.
- Large numbers of blacks are running in statewide races, but few have a chance to win.
- Four black Southerners are making a strong bid to be elected to Congress, from Georgia's 5th district, Virginia's 1st, Mississippi's 2d, and Louisiana's 8th.

Black Caucus Rises to Leadership in Congress

"Give us the ballot and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights. . . We will no longer plead—we will write the proper laws on the books."
Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, Washington, D.C., May 17, 1957

Three decades after Dr. King spoke those words, the record shows the **Congressional Black Caucus (CBC)** energetically at work to give truth to his prophecy. Consider the following:

• In the months after President Reagan's reelection in 1984, when the leadership of both parties in Congress proposed deep cuts in social spending, the CBC was ready: BILL GRAY (D-PA), **who had just become chairman of the powerful House Budget Committee, fought the battles inside the committee and CBC Chairman MICKEY LELAND (D-TX) put pressure on the House leadership to protect essential social programs. In the end, the Budget Committee restored more than $38 billion in cuts proposed by the Reagan administration.**

• **CBC members introduced over 18 bills to change U.S. policy toward South Africa, including the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985, which the House of Representatives passed by a 297-217 margin, and the even stronger sanctions legislation, sponsored by Congressman RON DELLUMS (D-CA) and passed without opposition on June 17, 1986.**

• In an institution where power lies within the committee system, **CBC members are chairmen of seven committees: Budget, Education and Labor, Small Business, Narcotics, Hunger, District of Columbia, and Ethics.**

• **The 21 CBC members are strategically placed on all the major committees to maximize the group's effectiveness in monitoring all legislative matters.** Committees give legislators their "principal opportunity to shape national policy in detail" and CBC members have done just that: for example, PARREN MITCHELL (D-MD) **saved the Small Business Administration from the Reagan cuts;** JOHN CONYERS (D-MI) and GUS SAVAGE (D-IL) **attached a multi-billion-dollar "set-aside" program to the defense appropriations bill** (now in conference committee); JULIAN DIXON (D-CA) **pushed through defunding of the Civil Rights Commission,** based on a finding that the CRC was no longer non-partisan

and objective under the chairmanship of Clarence Pendleton; CHARLES HAYES (D-IL) **introduced legislation to help school dropouts;** CHARLES RANGEL (D-NY), in a national radio address, **called for increasing tax revenues to cut the deficit;** WALTER FAUNTROY (D-DC) **held oversight hearings on the Federal Reserve Board's domestic monetary policies;** and MICKEY LELAND (D-TX) **pressured President Reagan to increase "Food for Peace" spending from $200 million to $800 million.**

Though its numbers are small, the CBC appears to wield tremendous power in the 435-member House of Representatives. This has given the members a breezy confidence which is epitomized by nine-term Congressman BILL CLAY (D-MO), who said to *Congressional Quarterly:* **"We're in a position to protect ourselves. We don't have to go hat in hand begging anybody.** In fact, it's just the reverse. Now a lot of people have to come hat in hand asking for favors."

Upset in Atlanta: Lewis Defeats Bond

White voters, who make up 43 percent of the registered voters in Georgia's 5th congressional district, **played a pivotal role in handing John Lewis his stunning victory over the favored candidate, Julian Bond.** Lewis received 80 percent of the white vote and benefited from **an unusual coalition of southside poor and working-class blacks and North Atlanta's white middle class.** . . . The final tally was Lewis—52 percent, Bond—48 percent. . . . **For years black Atlantans had used their swing vote to elect moderates over conservatives when faced with a choice of two white candidates; now, white Atlantans faced with two black candidates chose the moderate over the "radical."** . . . Lewis, who got only 40 percent of the black vote, campaigned on the theme that he was on the "people's slate," not the "black slate"; by contrast, **Julian Bond was perceived by white voters as being exclusively concerned with "an all-black agenda."** . . . Ironically, Bond's image as a radical may have been enhanced by his uncompromising stance during the 1982 reapportionment battle to make the 5th district majority black. . . . **The emergence of two black candidates running against each other, rather than against a white, may be a maturing of black politics but this was a divisive, hard-fought battle that split the black community,** leaving wounds that may take a while to heal.

More Blacks Running Statewide

In the Democratic gubernatorial primary in Maryland, too, the black community divided its support rather than unite behind one ticket. **Parren Mitchell, the dean of black politics in Baltimore, had been expected to draw 80 percent of the black vote to the candidacy of Steve Sachs (with Mitchell as lieutenant governor), but post-election polls showed Sachs and Mitchell got only 58 percent black support.** In the final days of the campaign, Mitchell blasted black supporters of his opponents as "ersatz neo-Negroes" who are "betraying the current generation of black Baltimoreans and a future generation." In the final tally, **the Sachs-Mitchell ticket was soundly defeated, 2-1, by Baltimore Mayor Donald Schaefer and his running mate, Melvin Steinberg. (Schaefer's replacement as mayor of Baltimore in November will be Baltimore City Council President Clarence "Du" Burns, a black man.)** . . . In the Wisconsin Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate, GARY GEORGE, a state senator, came in third with 11 percent of the vote.

Others who have already lost in statewide elections, despite an impressive showing, are: state Senator REGIS GROFF, who ran for lieutenant governor of Colorado; state Senator TERRY WILLIAMS, the only black elected official in Utah, who sought the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate; and veteran public servant JIM CLYBURNE, who ran for secretary of state of South Carolina. . . . **Senator Groff's defeat was a surprise: he had led in the early polls and had been endorsed by the state Democratic leadership and the *Denver Post;* his 12 years as a state senator and as a former floor leader of the senate Democrats supported his claim to be experienced and pragmatic;** and, although blacks are only 4 percent of Colorado's population, the state had previously elected a black lieutenant governor (**GEORGE L. BROWN** in 1975). **Yet, Groff lost, 59 to 42 percent, to a one-term state senator. . . . The surprise in Utah was that Senator Williams, a liberal Democrat, ran a neck-**

and-neck race to get 48 percent of the Democratic vote in this conservative Mormon state, where less than 1 percent of the population is black. . . .Jim Clyburne says he lost because of the long tradition of southern whites not supporting black candidates and because of low black turnout. Clyburne broke even in about 12 counties with large black majorities but won handily in other counties that were majority white. He says black voters may have stayed away from the polls because many polling places were on farms that were part of the plantations of the Old South. **Undoubtedly, another obstacle for Clyburne was the fact that his opponent was an incumbent.**

The most important remaining statewide elections are in California and Michigan. In California, Mayor TOM BRADLEY still trails the incumbent, Governor GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN—by 11 percent in early August polls. Governor Deukmejian may have strengthened his position by supporting anti-apartheid divestment legislation (which he had opposed last year). . . . **Though WILLIAM LUCAS is more than 20 percentage points behind the incumbent Democratic governor in the Michigan gubernatorial race, his chances have been boosted by his leadership of a coalition of fundamentalist Christians and blacks, who gave him their "rapturous acclaim" (according to conservative columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak) at a state Republican party convention in August.**

The lessons to be learned from these efforts to gain statewide office are: 1) black candidates must be able to attract at least 40 percent of the white vote, since blacks are not a majority in any state; **2) black candidates who can boast a long record of experience in public office have better chances of winning—candidates should not make their first race a statewide one; and 3) black candidates generally need undivided black support and a high turnout to have a chance of winning.**

Across the Nation

District of Columbia

Mayor Marion Barry easily won renomination in the Democratic primary with 70 percent of the vote. Barry carried all the wards in the city, except for the predominantly white Ward 3. He will face at-large Councilmember Carol Schwartz, a white Republican, in the November election.

With one exception, all the black incumbent councilmembers up for reelection were renominated. The exception was 3-term Councilmember William R. Spaulding, who was defeated by novice Harry Thomas. Thomas was endorsed by Congressman Walter Fauntroy (D-DC) and benefited from Spaulding's opposition to rent control—a key issue in ward 5, which is one of the city's poorest.

Florida

Despite an aggressive campaign and endorsements by the National Organization for Women and the National Women's Political Caucus, **Barbara Greadington was defeated in the Democratic primary in Florida's 2nd congressional district.** Greadington, a black woman, is a former Parole and Probation Commission member (and one-time chair). The district is 24 percent black.

Georgia

Martin Luther King III won the Democratic primary for Fulton County Commissioner, Ralph Abernathy III lost his bid for the state House, and attorney Michael Thurmond scored an upset victory over the incumbent in the Democratic primary for the 67th district House seat (Clarke County), a district that is only 24 percent black.

Louisiana

In the 8th congressional district, **a poll conducted on September 3-4 showed Faye Williams, a black attorney, leading a pack of five candidates in the Democratic primary.** Williams received the support of 22 percent of those polled; 20 percent supported her nearest rival, Carson Killens. Williams got the support of 52 percent

Continued on next page

of the black respondents and 6 percent of the whites. **According to the *Shreveport Times*, Williams is the first black candidate ever to have a serious chance of winning this district.**

Maryland

The Mitchell political dynasty took a beating in the Democratic primaries. Parren Mitchell's loss in the statewide race (see page 2) was followed by his nephew **state senator Clarence Mitchell's third-place showing in the 7th congressional district primary. The winner of the primary, Baltimore city councilman Kweisi Mfume, will now meet the Republican nominee, Reverend St. George Crosse, in the November election.** Mfume was supported by poor and middle-class blacks and about 20 percent of whites. He is expected to win easily in this 70 percent black and heavily Democratic district. . . .The one Mitchell to win was Michael Mitchell, who won the primary to replace his brother Clarence in the state senate.

In Prince George's County, Howard University law professor Alex Williams scored an upset Democratic primary victory over the incumbent State's Attorney Arthur Marshall—who has been in office since 1962. The county, a Washington, D.C., suburb, has a growing (now about 40 percent) and increasingly influential black community.

Mississippi

In the 2nd district, which has the hottest congressional race in the state, Democratic **challenger Mike Espy says the election will come down to who is best organized.** According to political observers, Espy is far better organized now than he was for the Democratic primary, which he won. In this poor rural district, **he is emphasizing the farm crisis to attract the white vote. He is also charging Republican incumbent Webb Franklin with voting more for Wall Street interests than for those of his own constituency. Finally, he is seeking to boost black turnout.** If he can secure enough funds for television and radio advertising to do that, he is given a good chance of beating Franklin.

New York

In the 6th congressional district (Queens), **the three-month incumbent, Alton R. Waldon, Jr. (who won a special election in June), was defeated in the Democratic primary by the Reverend Floyd Flake—who had been endorsed by Mayor Ed Koch and *The New York Times*.** Flake garnered 48 percent of the vote to Waldon's 41 percent; the third- and fourth-place finishers were businessman Simeon Golar and community activist Hulbert James.

Pennsylvania

The Pittsburgh suburb of Wilkinsburg is only **39 percent black but has four black city councilmembers (Ronald J. Hill, Peter Mathis, Ralph Watson, and Jean Kirkland), a black borough manager (Andrew Dent), seven blacks (of nine members) on the school board, a black constable, and a black school superintendent.** According to Hill, the election of so many blacks is due to heavy black voter participation, use of a black slate, and the switch from an at-large to a ward system of elections. In contrast, Pittsburgh has an at-large system of council elections and no black councilmembers.

Virginia

In the Virginia 1st district (Tidewater region—Newport News), **state Senator Robert Scott is attempting to oust one-term GOP Congressman Herbert Bateman.** Blacks constitute approximately a third of the electorate. . . .**Informed sources say Scott's chances are exceptionally good, since Bateman's hold on this House seat is a tenuous one indeed.** These sources report that a private poll shows that a **meager 39 percent would support Bateman in the absence of a named opponent.** This extremely modest showing almost never bodes well for an incumbent. **What is more, voters divided evenly on the statement, "Herb Bateman has had his chances as Congressman; it's time for someone new." Forty-two percent agree with this statement, and forty-two percent disagree.**

CONTRIBUTORS: **LINDA WILLIAMS, Senior Research Associate; ALFRED BALTIMORE, Roster Clerk; and FREDRICK C. HARRIS, Research Assistant.**

Black elected officials in the United States, January 1986

In 1970, only 1,469 blacks held elective office; now, that number has more than quadrupled. Nevertheless, the position of blacks as elected officials remains largely unchanged. Black elected officials compose only 1.5 percent of all elected officials in the United States. In recent years, the rate of growth in the number of black elected officials has declined. And they hold few federal and statewide offices. Further growth in the number of black elected officials, therefore, is needed and will depend on the ability of black candidates to appeal to nonblack electorates.

Eddie N. Williams, president JCPS

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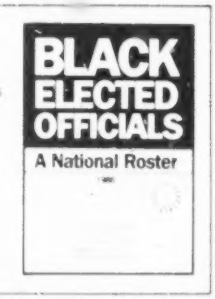

		Federal		State		Substate Regional		County			Municipal			Judicial and Law Enforcement				Education			
	Total	Senators	Representatives	Administrators	Senators	Representatives	Members, Regional Bodies	Other Regional Officials	County Executives	Members, County Governing Bodies	Members, Other County Bodies	Other County Officials	Mayors	Members, Municipal Governing Bodies	Members, Municipal Boards	Members, Advisory Commissions	Other Municipal Officials	Judges, State Courts of Last Resort	Judges, Other Courts	Magistrates, Justices of the Peace, Constables	Other Judicial Officials	Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, and Marshals	Other Law Enforcement Officials	Members, State Education Agencies	Members, University and College Boards	Members, Local School Boards	Other Education Officials
State																											
Alabama	403								6				21	238						1							
Alaska	4																										
Arizona	27																										
Arkansas	87				1								2	12													
California	287		4		1		1						11	61													
Colorado	11													1					4								
Connecticut	37													11													
Delaware	10													1													
District of Columbia	233													1													
Florida	276																										
Georgia	417				1								4	14													
Hawaii																											
Idaho																											
Illinois	420				4								4	14													
Indiana	142													3													
Iowa	34																										
Kansas	28																										
Kentucky	46																										
Louisiana	488													22					1								
Maine	3																										
Maryland	128				4									10													
Massachusetts	9																										
Michigan	314				4								1	8					1					1	10		
Minnesota	18																										
Mississippi	520				1				47	11	1			101			2		2			1					
Missouri	91													9													
Montana																											
Nebraska	14																										
Nevada	19																										
New Hampshire																											
New Jersey	208													7													
New Mexico	25																										
New York	440				4														4						11		
North Carolina	170				1									12											12		
North Dakota																											
Ohio	239				1									11											11		
Oklahoma	113				2									4											11		
Oregon																											
Pennsylvania	154													4											11		
Rhode Island	8																										
South Carolina	124				1								2	1											11		
South Dakota	20																										
Tennessee	42								2																		
Texas	280													11										1	10		
Utah	5																										
Vermont																											
Virginia	128													4													
Virgin Islands	4				1																						
Washington	17																										
West Virginia	28													1													
Wisconsin	15																										
Wyoming	1		–																								
Total	4,423	0	20	4	32	304	1	24	55	396	23	33	289	2,490	73	236	16	8	366	233	28	4	15	30	46	1,437	72

Source: Black Elected Officials: A Count as of 1985 (1986)

Blacks and the Religious Right Have Few Common Interests

Polls, History Show That Alliance Is Unlikely

by Linda F. Williams

The history of American politics is filled with unlikely coalitions—none more so than the coalition of blacks and southern whites in the New Deal Democratic majority from 1936 (when black voters joined the coalition) to 1964 (when southern whites deserted it in droves). Today, blacks are searching for new coalitions that can accommodate their steadily increasing political power and that do not relegate their concerns to the back burner.

Many blacks, long dissatisfied with their treatment by the Democratic party, may support an independent presidential bid by Jesse Jackson. Others, including Jackson himself, have sought to reform the Democrats from within. Still others have wondered whether a post-Reagan Republican party can frame an appeal to black voters.

While these questions are simmering in the minds of black voters, one issue has come to a full boil: do blacks have a future in a coalition with the Religious Right, as has been suggested by the success of William Lucas in winning the Republican gubernatorial nomination in Michigan? Or, put another way, can the GOP build a new majority coalition that will include both the white Christian right and a substantial influx of blacks? This strategy has been embraced by conservative columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, who wrote: "Welding blacks and evangelicals is the core of both Lucas's long-shot bid against popular Democratic Governor James Blanchard and the building of a new Republican party."

The question of whether Lucas can win by garnering Religious Right and black support will be answered on November 4. In the primary Lucas clearly did well with the Religious Right in Michigan, but the state's black voters are heavily Democratic, and few (approximately 7 percent, according to a Gordon S. Black exit poll) crossed party lines. Thus, the question of whether the support of the Religious Right will be unfortunate baggage for Lucas in wooing black voters remains to be answered.

The broader question is whether a black/Religious Right coalition is feasible in national politics. Even if a substantial number of blacks and the Religious Right in Michigan vote for Lucas, there will be no evidence that it is. Blacks who vote for Lucas because they genuinely support him or because they want to see him make history could well desert a white candidate endorsed by the Religious Right (just as many whites vote for liberal white Democrats but often refuse to support liberal black Democrats). Moreover, history and public opinion data tell us that a black/Religious Right coalition is unlikely.

The Rise of the Religious Right

The emergence of the Religious Right (the term is used to encompass the various religious groups pursuing a conservative social agenda; where more specific terms are used in the survey data, those terms will be used here as well) as a political force goes back at least to the late 1960s. It arose from fundamentalist Christian objections to numerous changes taking place in American culture and society, including changes in relations between the genders and between the races. In 1968 and 1972, the Religious Right was one of the key elements in the movement of northern ethnic Catholics and southern white Protestants away from presidential-level Democratic voting, at the same time that blacks were increasing their support for the Democratic party.

Watergate confused matters, enabling Jimmy Carter briefly to recoup for the Democrats and hold both blacks and a slim majority of white fundamentalists in the same party in 1976. But by the late 1970s, disillusionment with Carter had set in, and the Religious Right rose again with Catholic and Protestant whites conjoined in a unique political movement to support Ronald Reagan for president. By 1984, with the Democrats perceived as leaning toward the positions held by blacks, women, and gays, and the Republican national

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platform adhering to the positions of the Religious Right, the pro-GOP trend surged, and Ronald Reagan's share of the fundamentalist/evangelical vote soared. Reagan's share of the white born-again Christian vote rose from 63 percent in 1980 to 80 percent in 1984, and his share of black support, already at a low 11 percent in 1980, fell even lower to 9 percent in 1984.

Thus, outside of the Carter aberration, every election since 1964 has shown that a majority of white fundamentalists and black Americans voted for opposing presidential contenders. In short, the last 20 years of American electoral history demonstrate the improbability of a black/Religious Right coalition.

No Basis for Alliance

A July 1986 national poll conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* gives few reasons for expecting that pattern to change at the national level. When members of the two groups were asked whether they would be inclined to vote for various potential presidential contenders, the fundamentalists gave their greatest support (48 percent) to George Bush, whereas blacks gave their greatest support (70 percent) to Edward Kennedy, who has announced that he has no intentions of running in 1988. And whereas 61 percent of blacks said they would be inclined to vote for Jesse Jackson, only 12 percent of white fundamentalists said they would support him. Interestingly, television evangelist Pat Robertson did not score well with either blacks (17 percent) or white fundamentalists (28 percent). When asked whom they would prefer in a presidential contest between Colorado Senator Gary Hart and Bush, blacks preferred Hart to Bush by 51 percent to 21 percent; the fundamentalists preferred Bush to Hart by 47 percent to 28 percent. When asked which political party was best for handling religious problems, 52 percent of blacks and only 21 percent of white fundamentalists named the Democratic party. Thus, the results of this recent poll suggest that in July 1986, at least, blacks and white fundamentalists appear once again to be lining up in support of opposing candidates and parties.

Differences between blacks and white fundamentalists go far beyond choices on potential candidates and partisanship. Differences on issues are prominent, as well. For example, whereas 58 percent of blacks in the survey supported affirmative action, only 36 percent of white fundamentalists did so. Whereas 72 percent of blacks thought government was not paying enough attention to blacks and other minorities, only 19 percent of white fundamentalists thought the same thing.

On non-race-specific issues as well, blacks and white fundamentalists disagreed. Whereas only 22 percent of white fundamentalists want to decrease defense spending, 44 percent of blacks want to decrease it. Whereas 35 percent of white fundamentalists want more domestic spending, 57 percent of blacks want more. Although a large majority of blacks (66 percent) support the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), only 43 percent of white fundamentalists do so.

On some issues perceived to be important to the Religious Right, blacks and white fundamentalists may agree. For example, 74 percent of blacks and 94 percent of white fundamentalists favor prayer in the public schools. But on other issues on the Religious Right's agenda, the differences persist. For example, 65 percent of white fundamentalists want homosexual relations between consenting adults to be illegal, while only 44 percent of blacks share that view. Sixty-seven percent of white fundamentalists want laws forbidding pornography to be applied to all age groups; only 28 percent of blacks want such a law. Sixty-four percent of white fundamentalists believe in creationism; only 32 percent of blacks do so. Moreover, though fundamentalists vote on the basis of these "moral" issues, blacks consider them relatively unimportant in making voting choices.

Political observers say the Religious Right is already splintering and dissipating its strength.

In short, blacks and white fundamentalists remain divided on candidates, parties, and issues. An alliance between these two groups in the national political arena is unlikely. Putting together a majority coalition including blacks and the Religious Right appears difficult indeed.

Backlash

Whether blacks would gain any political influence from such a coalition, even in the absence of issue differences, is questionable. Many political observers say the Religious Right is already splintering and dissipating its strength.

Bitterness between the Religious Right and GOP regulars is evident, and the backlash against the Religious Right may already have begun. For example, a large majority of southern Republicans (59 percent) in a June 1986 *Charlotte Observer* poll agreed with the statement that "Pat Robertson should not run for president." And a July NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll found that 78 percent of Americans "would not vote for a candidate—like Robertson—who says he gets direct instructions from God about his political career." (Only 8 percent said they would vote for Robertson.) Similarly, a July *Denver Post* poll found a majority of Coloradoans agreeing (by 54 percent to 33 percent) that "conservative religious movements as represented by Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson are becoming a dangerous force in American politics."

Under these circumstances, blacks would have nothing to gain and much to lose by allying themselves with Religious Right groups that are losing their influence within the Republican party and on the national political scene. ■

TELESCOPE

JUSTICE OFFICIAL SIGNALS VOTING LAW CHANGE, THEN BACKS OFF

In a series of confusing public statements, Assistant Attorney General Brad Reynolds announced a major reversal of policy on voting rights enforcement and then backed off his earlier statement.

Reynolds's statements concerned Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which requires the Justice Department to "preclear" all voting law changes by any jurisdiction in states with a history of racial discrimination. At the American Political Science Association convention in August, Reynolds said that the "results" test would not apply to Section 5— making it easier for states to win preclearance. A few days later, after the story made national news, Reynolds called the policy change a "minor" one and announced that the Justice Department would deny preclearances "whenever the change smacks of racial bias."

Reynolds's comments drew fire from members of Congress and voting rights lawyers. Rep. Don Edwards called Reynolds's proposed policy change "an outrageous retreat on the Voting Rights Act." The Joint Center's voting rights expert, attorney Frank Parker, said, "It would mean the Justice Department would be approving a large number of racially discriminatory voting law changes that would violate the Voting Rights Act."

JCPS LAUNCHES POLICY INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PUBLIC OFFICIALS

The Joint Center has launched a new program, called the National Policy Institute (NPI), which is designed to strengthen the individual and organized capacity of black elected officials to influence public policy at all levels of government. The goals of the institute are:

1. To respond to the individual and collective needs of officials for information and data on public policy issues,
2. To help officials make their influence felt in legislative and other policy arenas,
3. To assist national organizations of black elected officials,
4. To convene a national conference of black elected officials every four years, beginning in 1988.

The institute concept grew out of a national conference of black public officials that was sponsored by the Joint Center, the National Caucus of Black State Legislators, Congressional Black Caucus, National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, Judicial Council of the National Bar Association, National Conference of Black Mayors, National Association of Black County Officials, and the National Association of Black School Board Members.

"The National Policy Institute will enhance the historic link between the Joint Center and black elected officials," JCPS President Eddie N. Williams said. "It will be a one-stop service station that provides research, policy analyses, data, and other information our public officials need. We are grateful to the Ford Foundation for providing funds to initiate this vital program."

Williams also announced the appointment of Russell Owens to serve as director of the National Policy Institute. Owens was formerly executive director of the Department of Employment and Training of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He has also worked for the National Governor's Association, the Governor of Colorado, and the National Association of Counties. ■

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